

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Population characteristics describe the diverse social, demographic, and economic features of women in the U.S. Representing slightly more than half of the Nation's population, women and girls accounted for over 144 million in 2003.

Analysis and comparison of data by sex, age, and race and ethnicity can be used to tailor the development and evaluation of programs and policies serving women's health.

The following section presents data on population characteristics that affect women's health. These factors include age, race and ethnicity, household composition, education, income, occupation, and participation in Federal programs.



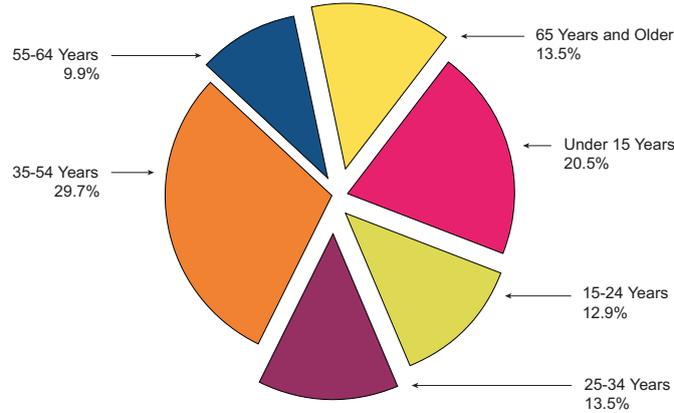
U.S. POPULATION

In 2003, the U.S. population reached almost 283 million, with females representing 51.1 percent of the population. Females younger than age 35 accounted for 46.9 percent of the female population, those aged 35 to 64 years represented 39.6 percent, and females over age 65 accounted for 13.5 percent.

The distribution by sex was fairly even across all age groups except among older persons, where women accounted for a greater percentage of the population. Of those aged 65 years and older, 57.6 percent were women.

U.S. Female Population,* by Age, 2003

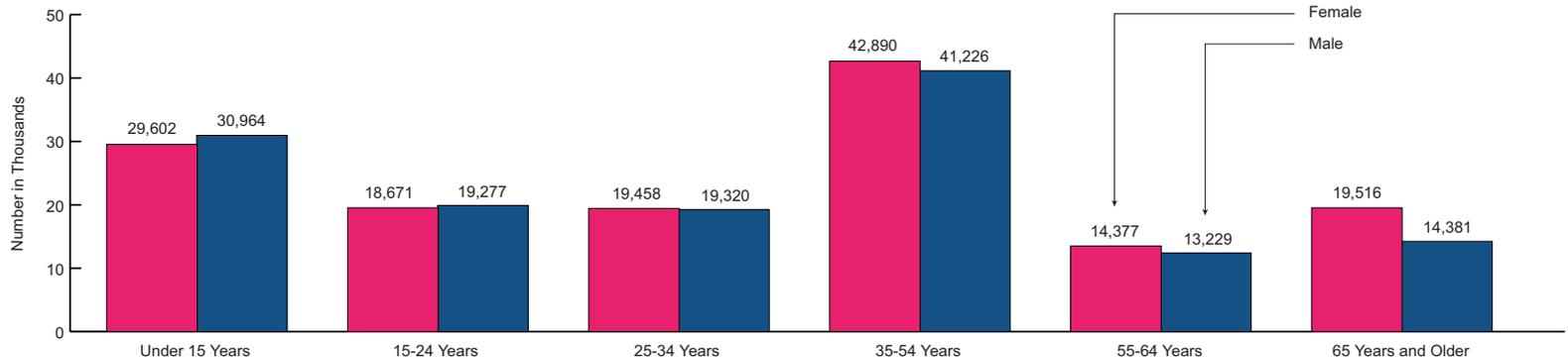
Source (I.1): U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



*Includes only noninstitutionalized population not living in group quarters.

U.S. Population, by Age and Sex,* 2003

Source (I.1): U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

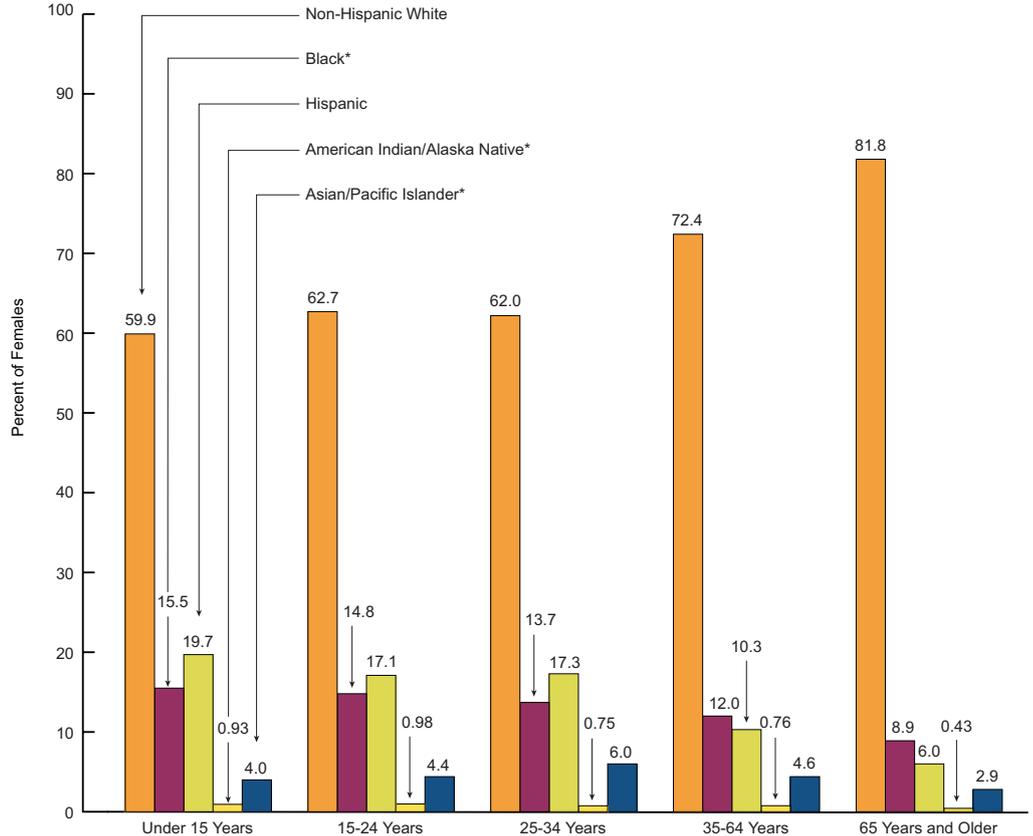


U.S. FEMALE POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY

The growing diversity of the U.S. female population is reflected in the racial and ethnic distribution of women across age groups. The younger female population, under 25 years of age, is significantly more diverse than the older female population. The non-White population represents 39 percent of females under 25 years of age compared to only 18 percent of females 65 and older. Non-Hispanic Whites represent 61 percent of females under 25 years of age and 82 percent of females 65 and older.

U.S. Female Population, by Age and Race/Ethnicity, 2003

Source (I.1): U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



*Does not exclude Hispanics.



HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION/ WOMEN AS CAREGIVERS

In 2003, 50.3 percent of adult women were married and living with a spouse. Over 10 percent of women were the head of a household, meaning that they had children or other relatives living in their household, but no spouse. Another 16.6 percent of adult women lived in the home of a parent or other relative. Almost 15 percent of adult women lived alone, and nearly 7 percent were living with non-relatives.

The households in which women live have a variety of structures. For instance, among women living with a spouse, just over 2 percent lived with their spouse in someone else's home

(such as with parents or roommates). In 2003, almost 5 million women lived in unmarried-partner households. Of these women, 93.5 percent lived with a male partner and the other 6.5 percent lived with a female partner.¹ Many women also live with their adult children or their grandchildren. In 2000 there were 3.7 million women living with their grandchildren, compared to just over 2 million men.²

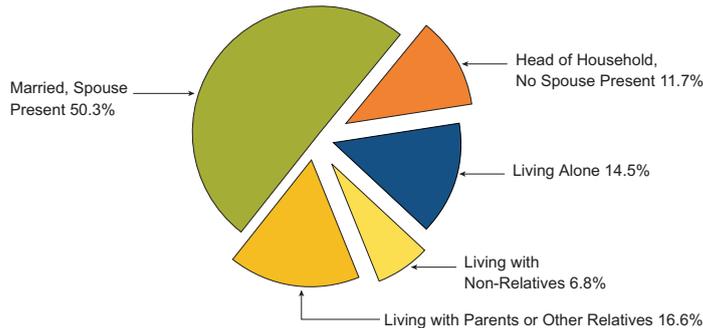
Women often function as caregivers for the people with whom they live, or for other relatives or friends. One out of every four people is a caregiver for a family member or friend, and, in the absence of an able spouse, a daughter or daughter-in-law is most likely to assume the role

of caregiver.³ Approximately 75 percent of caregivers for older family members and friends are female.⁴ Of the 2.4 million grandparents who live with and are responsible for grandchildren, 63 percent are women.

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau. 2003 American Community Survey Summary Tables. American FactFinder, Table PCT008.
- 2 U.S. Census Bureau. Grandparents living with grandchildren: 2000. Census 2000 Brief, October 2003.
- 3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, Administration on Aging. Snapshot: National Family Caregiver Support Program. August 2003.
- 4 Family Caregiver Alliance. Selected caregiver statistics. <http://www.caregiver.org>

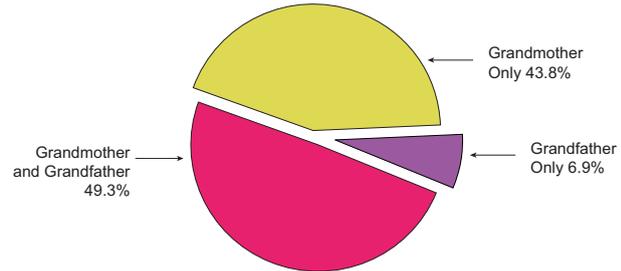
Adult Women,* by Household Composition, 2003

Source (I.2): U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey



Grandchildren Living with their Grandparents, 2002

Source (I.3): U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey



*Civilian, non-institutionalized population ages 15 years and older.

MATERNITY LEAVE

The time a mother takes off from work, paid or unpaid, due to pregnancy and childbirth is known as maternity leave. Since 1997, of mothers who were employed at the time of their last pregnancy, 70.2 percent took maternity leave after birth. Women between the ages of 30 and 34 were most likely to have taken maternity leave for their last pregnancy (78.9 percent), while women between the ages of 18 and 25 were least likely (55.8 percent). This rate also

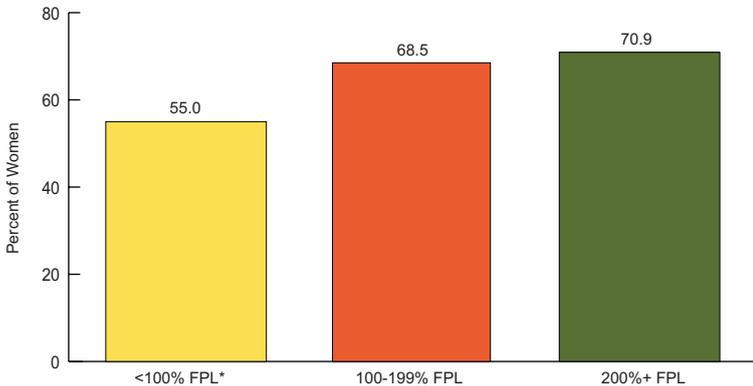
varied across race and ethnicity groups, with Hispanic women being the least likely to have taken maternity leave (60.1 percent). A majority of women who reported taking maternity leave for their last pregnancy had household incomes at 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or greater.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) guarantees women who are on maternity leave that their job will be protected for up to 12 weeks in any 12-month period. Among women

who took maternity leave during their last pregnancy, 80.7 percent reported taking 12 weeks or less. Because paid maternity leave is not readily available from most employers, women usually use a combination of short-term disability, sick leave, vacation, and personal days in order to have some portion of their maternity leave paid. However, among women who reported taking maternity leave for their last pregnancy, 29.7 percent did not have any portion of their maternity leave paid.

Women Aged 18 to 44 Who Took Maternity Leave for Their Last Pregnancy, by Poverty Level, 2002

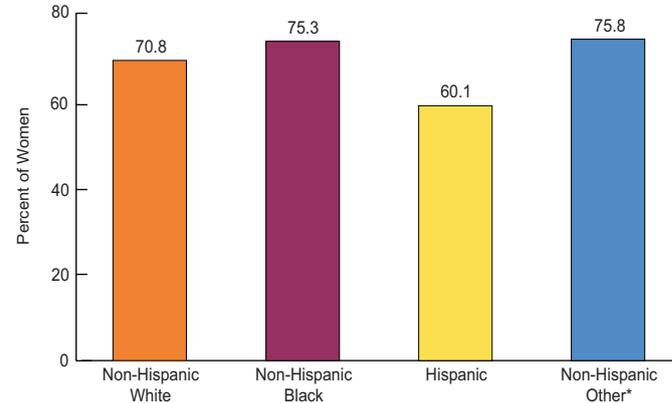
Source (I.4): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Survey of Family Growth



*Federal Poverty Level

Women Aged 18 to 44 Who Took Maternity Leave for Their Last Pregnancy, by Race/Ethnicity, 2002

Source (I.4): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Survey of Family Growth



*Includes Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and persons of more than one race.

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES AND TENURE AWARDED TO WOMEN

The number of post-secondary educational degrees awarded to women has risen from just over half a million in 1969-1970 to more than 1.4 million in 2001-2002. Although the number of degrees earned by men has also increased, the growth among women has been much faster and therefore the proportion of degrees earned by women has also risen dramatically. In 1969-

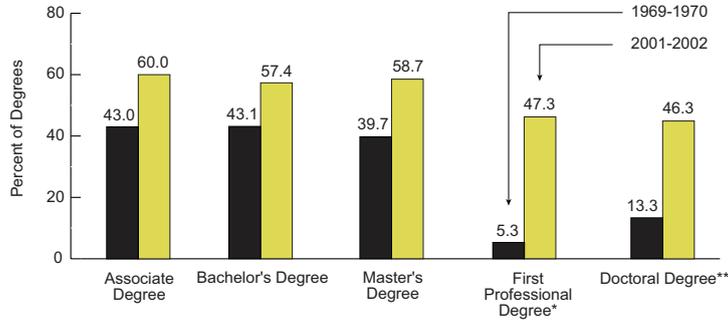
1970, men earned a majority of every type of degree, while in 2001-2002, women earned more than 50 percent of all associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees, and earned almost half of all first professional and doctoral degrees. The most significant increase has been in the proportion of women earning a first professional degree, which jumped from 5.3 percent in 1969-1970 to 47.3 percent in 2001-2002. The total number of women earning their first professional degree (38,191) was 20 times greater

than in 1969-1970 (1,841).

Among women working as full-time instructional staff for degree-granting institutions, 41.5 percent had tenure during the 2001-2002 academic year, compared to 56.5 percent of men. This varied greatly by rank, with the highest rate of tenure among women with the rank of Professor (90.7 percent). This is the only rank where the rate of tenure was higher among men (92.3 percent) than women.

Degrees Awarded to Women, by Type, 1969-1970 and 2001-2002

Source (I.5): U.S. Department of Education, Digest of Education Statistics

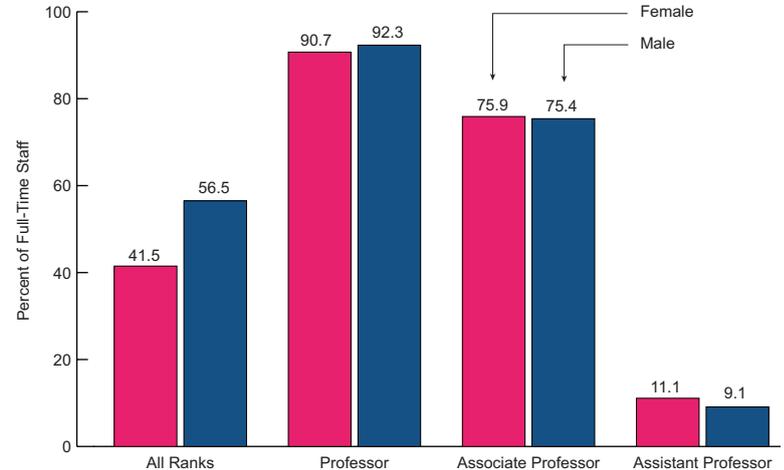


*Includes fields of dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.), medicine (M.D.), optometry (O.D.), osteopathic medicine (D.O.), pharmacy (D.Pharm.), podiatry (D.P.M.), veterinary medicine (D.V.M.), chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.), law (LL.B. or J.D.), and theological professions (M.Div. or M.H.L.).

**Includes Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.) as well as degrees awarded for fulfilling specialized requirements in professional fields such as education (Ed.D.), musical arts (D.M.A.), business administration (D.B.A.), and engineering (D.Eng. or D.E.S.). First-professional degrees, such as M.D. and D.D.S., are not included under this heading.

Full-Time Instructional Staff with Tenure in Degree-Granting Institutions, by Academic Rank and Sex, 2001-2002

Source (I.5): U.S. Department of Education, Digest of Education Statistics



WOMEN IN HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOOLS

The health professions have long been characterized by sex disparities. Some professions, such as medicine and dentistry, have historically been dominated by men, while others, such as nursing, have been predominantly female. Over the past several decades, these gaps have narrowed, and in some cases women outnumber their male counterparts. In 1980-1981, 47.4 percent of pharmacy students were women, while in 2002-2003, women represented the majority at 65.7 percent. Even in fields where men are still the majority, the representation of female students has grown. In 1980-1981, only 26.5 percent of medical students were women compared to 46.7 percent in 2002-2003; in 2002, women represented 44.6 percent of the student body at schools of osteopathic medicine (data not shown). Similar gains have been made in the field of dentistry, where 42.0 percent of students were women in 2002-2003 compared to only 17.0 percent in 1980-1981.

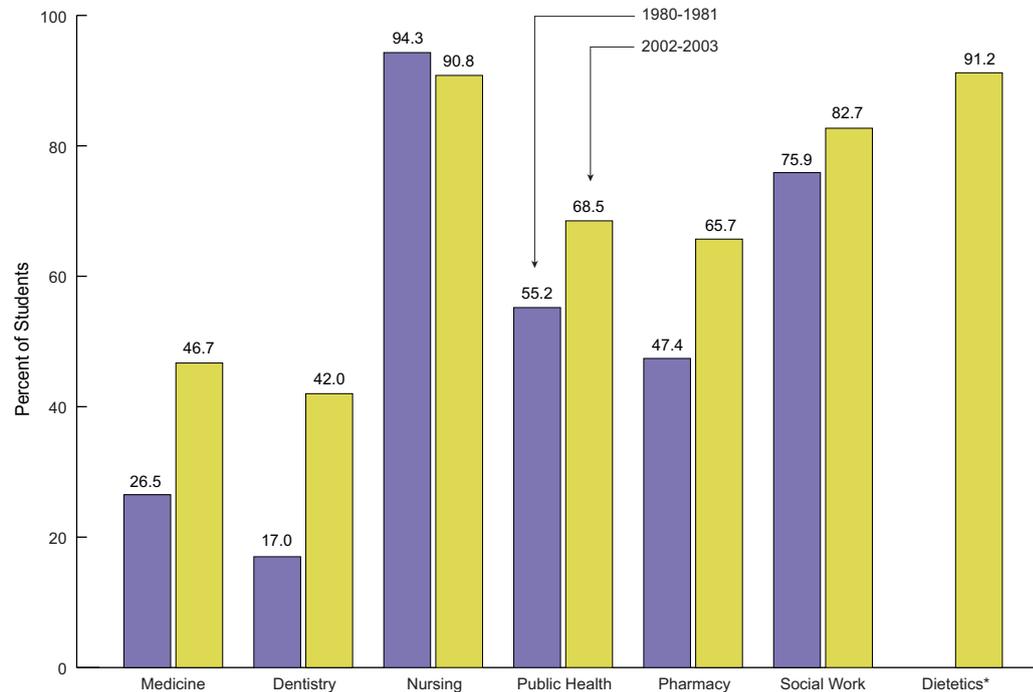
Female students represent the majority in a number of health professions schools, including social work (82.7 percent), public health (68.5 percent), and optometry (58.6 percent, not shown). Women also represent the vast majority of enrollees in dietetics programs—in 2002, 91.2 percent of dietetics students and interns

were women. Nursing also continues to be a field dominated by women, although the proportion of students who are female is slowly declining. In the 1980-1981 academic year,

94.3 percent of nursing students were female, while in 2003, females composed 90.8 percent of all master's-level nursing students.

Women in Schools for Selected Health Professions, 1980-1981 and 2002-2003

Source (I.6): Professional Associations



*Data from 1980-1981 are unavailable

WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE

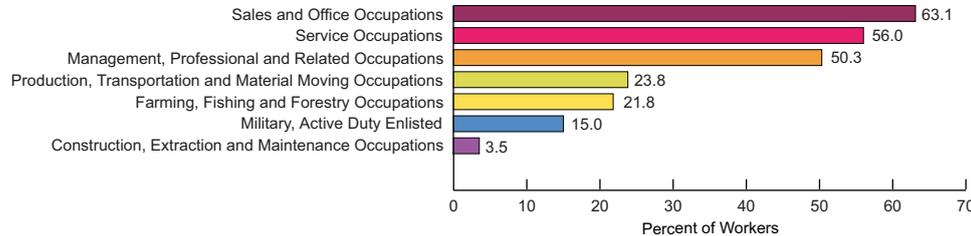
In 2003, females aged 16 and older made up 46.4 percent of the workforce. Among working females, 75 percent worked full-time, compared to 89 percent of males. Females who were full-time wage and salary workers earned a weekly median of \$552 while men earned a median of \$695 per week, a ratio of 79.5 cents to one dollar. This ratio has risen from 63 cents to a dollar in 1979. In 2003, 5.7 percent of employed women held multiple jobs, compared to 4.8 percent of men. Among women holding multiple jobs, 46 percent held a primary job full time and a secondary job part time, 32 percent held two part time jobs, and 2 percent held two full time jobs.¹

The ratio of females' earnings to those of

males differed considerably by age, race, and ethnicity in 2003. Women aged 45 to 54 earned only 73 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts, while women aged 16 to 24 earned 93.3 cents for every dollar earned by males of the same age. Among Blacks and Hispanics, females earned 88 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts, while White females earned 79 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts. The earnings of Asian females were 5 percent greater than those of White females, 22 percent greater than those of Black females, and 46 percent greater than those of Hispanic females. Comparatively, the earnings of Asian men were 8 percent greater than those of White men, 39 percent greater than those of Black men, and 66 percent greater than those of Hispanic men.²

Representation of Females Aged 16 and Older in Occupational Sectors, 2003

Source (I.7): U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey; Department of Defense*



*Data on military enlistment are from the Department of Defense, FY 2002; all other are from the Census Bureau.

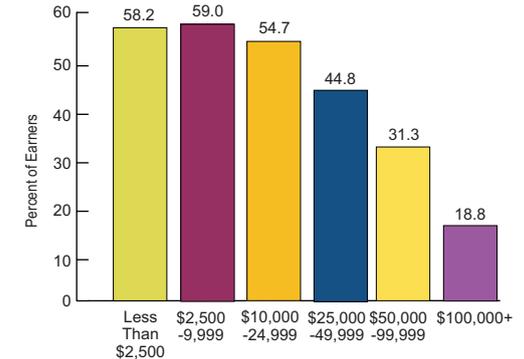
Both males and females with less than a high school diploma have experienced a decline in inflation-adjusted earnings since 1979; however, females' earnings have fallen by only 8 percent compared to 28 percent for males. Among those with college degrees, earnings for women and men have risen 34 and 22 percent respectively since 1979.²

1 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *The employment situation: December 2004. January 2005.*

2 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Highlights of women's earnings in 2003. Report #978. September 2004.*

Representation of Females Aged 16 and Older in Annual Earning Levels, 2003

Source (I.8): U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



WOMEN AND POVERTY

In 2003, there were 35.9 million people living with incomes below the Federal poverty threshold.¹ The poverty rate for all women 18 years and older in 2003 was 12.4 percent (13.8 million women). Poverty rates vary by age group among women, with the youngest women aged 18-24 years reporting a poverty rate of

19.7 percent. The lowest poverty rate (8.9 percent) was found among women aged 45-64. The poverty rate increases to 10.6 percent for women aged 65-74 and to 14.3 percent for women aged 75 years and older.

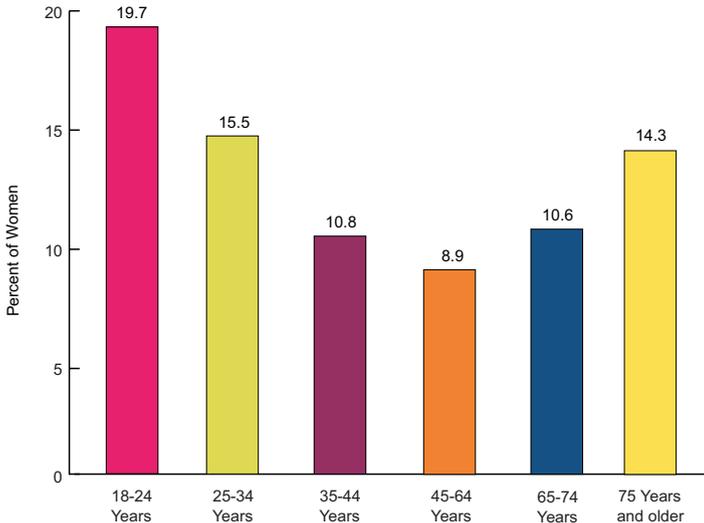
Women in female-headed households with no spouse experienced higher rates of poverty (24.4 percent) than women in married-couple

families (5.2 percent) and men in male-headed households (8.8 percent).

¹ The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family's total income is less than that family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered to be poor. Examples of 2003 poverty levels were \$9,393 for an individual, \$12,015 for a family of two, \$14,680 for a family of three, and \$18,810 for a family of four.

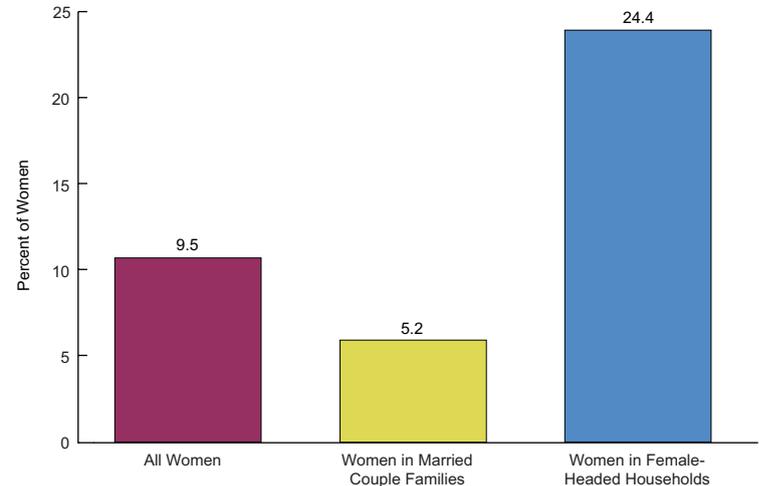
Women Living Below the Poverty Level, by Age, 2003

Source (I.9): U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey



Women in Families,* Living Below the Poverty Level, by Household Type, 2003

Source (I.9): U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey



*A group of 2 people or more related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together.

WOMEN AND FEDERAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Federal programs can provide low-income women and their families with essential help in obtaining food and income support. The Federal Food Stamp Program helps low-income individuals purchase food; in 2003, 68 percent of all adult Food Stamp participants were

women. Nearly half (46 percent) of women participants were in the 18-35 age group.

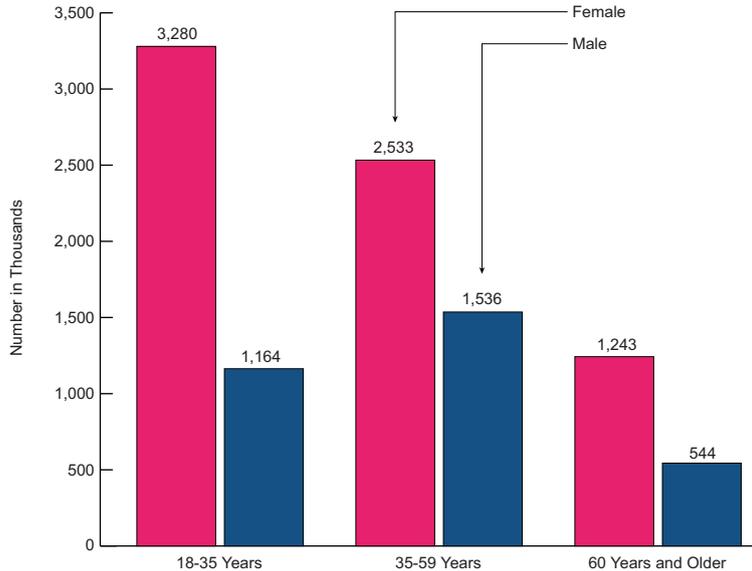
The Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) also plays an important role in serving women and families by providing supplementary nutrition during pregnancy, the postpartum period, and while breastfeeding. Most WIC participants

(76 percent) are infants and children; however, the program also serves over 1.8 million women, representing 24 percent of WIC participants. From 1992 to 2003, the number of adult women participating in WIC increased by 51 percent, and it continues to rise.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Federally- and State-funded, provides

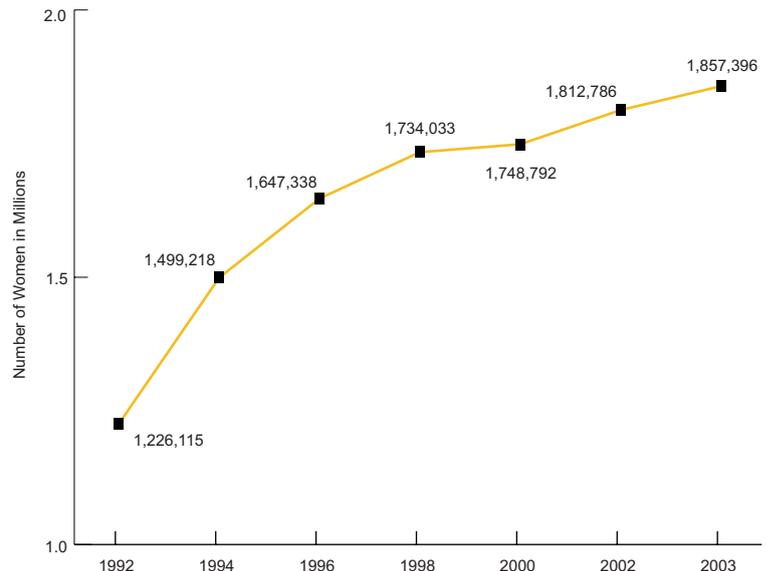
Adult Recipients of Food Stamps, by Age and Sex, 2003

Source (I.10): U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Stamp Quality Control Sample



Women WIC Participants, Selected Years 1992-2003

Source (I.11): U.S. Department of Agriculture, WIC Program Participation Data



monetary assistance and work opportunities to needy families. In 1996, TANF replaced the national welfare program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and related initiatives. The main goals of TANF are to move recipients into work and to turn welfare into a program of temporary assistance with a

lifetime maximum enrollment of 5 years.

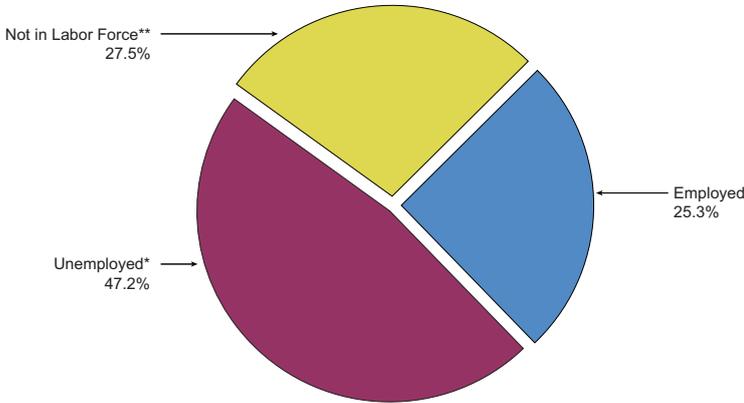
In Fiscal Year 2002, adult TANF recipients numbered 1.3 million, of whom 1.2 million (over 90 percent) were women. Over three-quarters of female TANF recipients were in the 20-39 year age group. Among adult female TANF recipients, 25 percent were employed,

47 percent were unemployed and work, and 27.5 percent were not in the labor force (unemployed and not looking for work.)

In 2002, the average amount of monthly assistance provided through TANF was \$418 per family. Of TANF families who had earned income, the monthly earnings averaged \$683.

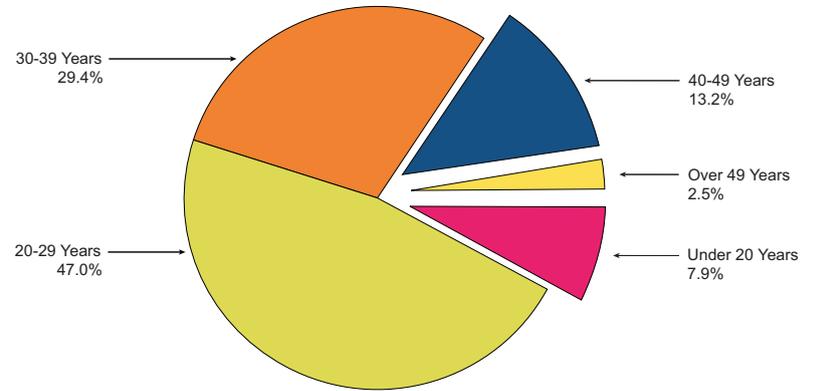
Adult Female Recipients of TANF, by Employment Status, Fiscal Year 2002

Source (I.12): Administration for Children and Families, National TANF Data File



Female Recipients of TANF, by Age, Fiscal Year 2002

Source (I.12): Administration for Children and Families, National TANF Data File



*Looking for work

**Unemployed, not looking for work (including those who have stopped looking).